

President Komorowski, Prime Minister Tusk, President Buzek, Prime Minister Kaczyński, Archbishop Głódź, Chairman Sniadek, Mayor Szczurek, Szanowni Panstwo.

Thirty years ago, the courageous protests of a few brave shipyard workers galvanized a country, and shook the foundations of a divided world. What began as a protest against the firing of a fellow worker grew into a mass movement—a movement which to this day gives hope to millions denied freedom and opportunity.

I first traveled to Poland a few months before these historic events. Few dared to imagine then what we see today: A resilient and prosperous Poland. The sixth largest nation of the European Union. A strong and proud NATO ally. And a persuasive example of the power of individuals to change the world.

The courage and persistence of a small group of workers in Gdansk 30 years ago showed it was possible to stand up to a totalitarian regime and to win recognition of universal rights. The right to organize. The right to strike. The fundamental right to say what you think. And the men and women of Solidarity showed it was possible to do so in a peaceful mass movement. This had an impact on the region, and throughout the world. It was the domino that toppled the communist system in central and Eastern

Europe. And it is no exaggeration to say that the power of Poland's example played a major role in the more democratic world that emerged in the 1990s.

No one followed the historic events in Poland more closely than Ronald Reagan. In words that invoke another time, he said: "In factories, farms, and schools, in cities and towns around the globe, we the people of the Free World stand as one with our Polish brothers and sisters."

Today it is Poland -- and Solidarity -- that stand with their brothers and sisters around the world. Democracy activists to the East look to Poland for inspiration and counsel. In Cuba, democrats study and emulate civil disobedience strategies developed and proven here. American and Polish NGOs rely on Solidarity members' expertise to train democracy activists in the Middle East, in the Balkans, and in South Asia.

The United States is honored to count Poland as a close Ally and trusted friend. At the core of our alliance is a deep-seated commitment to democracy and human rights -- to security and prosperity. As Poland and the United States work together to promote these fundamental values in challenging places like Afghanistan, we look to Solidarity for inspiration. Solidarity's achievements remind us how much can be done by a committed few in the face of overwhelming challenges, and Solidarity's

legacy inspires us to lend a hand to others as they seek to build their own democratic futures.

In honoring the achievements and inspiration of the Solidarity movement, on behalf of the United States, “Today All Americas honor Poland.”

It is now my privilege to read the following statement from President Barack Obama on behalf of the American people.

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*I am pleased to join all those celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Solidarity Movement.*

*Thirty years ago at the Gdansk shipyard, brave men and women won the right to strike and to form an independent trade union. This victory, and the work of individuals like Lech Wałęsa, Anna Walentynowicz, and Jacek Kuroń, gave birth to Solidarity – a trade union that quickly became a mass movement. This movement sparked peaceful, democratic change in Poland, and served as a source of inspiration in Central Europe and around the world.*

*Through the Solidarity movement, the people of Poland reminded us of the power each of us has to write our own destiny. In the face of tyranny*

*and oppression, they chose freedom and democracy and, in so doing, changed their country and the course of history.*

*Today Poland is free. A proud member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Poland has taken its rightful place in the community of democratic nations, advancing the cause of freedom and human dignity around the world. The United States and Poland are bound together by our solemn obligations to one another as NATO allies, and we stand shoulder to shoulder in addressing global challenges, such as our effort to promote stability, security and prosperity in Afghanistan. The Polish people have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to liberty through their many contributions to promoting democracy and security around the world.*

*As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Solidarity movement we are reminded of the vision, sacrifice, and struggle of those courageous men and women who risked everything to stand up to oppression. Today, there are still those who live under tyranny and are denied human rights. The Solidarity Movement is a source of inspiration in the fight for liberty for all the world's citizens. Together, let us renew our commitment to keep the light of freedom burning bright for all who currently endure the darkness of tyranny.*

*On behalf of the American people, I offer my congratulations on this important anniversary.*

*Barack Obama.*

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Chairman Śniadek, it is my great honor to present President Obama's message to you and to all current and former members of the Solidarity Movement. On his behalf, I salute you and thank you for your heroic efforts.

Dziękuję bardzo.